

## **MORTALITY AND MORBIDITY RELATED TO MENTAL DISORDERS IN TENNESSEE: YOUTH AND ADULTS**

- Suicide was the eighth leading cause of death in Tennessee in 1996. The suicide rate was 13.3 per 100,000 population (the age-adjusted suicide rate was 12.4). At 23 per 100,000, the male suicide rate was almost six times higher than the rate for females (4.4).
- Whites, especially males, have higher suicide rates than blacks. The suicide rate was 14.5 per 100,000 for whites and 8 per 100,000 for blacks. For white females, the suicide rate was 5.1, which was four times higher than the rate for black females. The white male suicide rate of 25 per 100,000 was 58% higher than the rate for black males.
- In 1996, the suicide rate for Tennessee males ages 20-34 years was 30 per 100,000, compared with the national target rate of 21 established under the Year 2000 Healthy People Objectives. Their rate was 43% higher than the target.
- In a 1995/1997 CHRGT-DH statewide survey, 13% of high school students in Tennessee reported having attempted suicide. Female students were 84% more likely than male students to report an attempt, and white students 23% more likely than black students.
- Of the student suicide attempters, 25% reported using alcohol or other drugs just prior to their attempt. This represents 3.2% of all students. A higher percentage of females reported consuming alcohol or other drugs prior to the attempt than did males, and more whites did so than blacks.
- Students residing in poverty households constituted an especially high-risk group for suicide attempts. Twenty-six percent of poor white female students reported a suicide attempt as did 16% of their black counterparts. Respective figures for white and black males were 14% and 9%.
- Twenty-two percent of high school students reported that they often or almost always feel depressed. There is little variation by race. But more females (28%) reported such depression than males (16%).
- Poverty and mental health symptoms were linked. Poor high school students (33%) were more likely than non-poor students (20%) to report that they often or almost always feel depressed. Forty-two percent of poor white female students reported such depression compared with 24% of their male opposites. Respective figures for black females and males were 33% and 19%.